

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, CAROLINE, DUCHESS DE BERRI.

DURING a period of forty years, the sufferings of the House of Bourbon have formed a theme of pity and deep commiseration. As a shadow on the substance, misfortune has been their constant attendant; their partizans, friends, and dearest connections have alike participated in their privations and their wrongs, their miseries and their griefs. If, for a moment, hope may illumine the unexplored vista of the future, suddenly a dark cloud dims its brightness, and calamity ensues. The wife—the widow—of a Bourbon, what have not been the distress, the sufferings, the mental agonies of her to whom this brief page is devoted! United, in early youth, to the object of her affection, the conjugal ties were drawn yet closer by the birth of a daughter; within five months from the date of that seemingly auspicious event, the blood of her beloved husband stained her vestments; a son, the heir of misfortune, yet a blessing to her maternal love, was born; and, after living years of widowed mourning, of unsoothed sorrow, she is an exile from that country in which it had been her thought to live, to die, and—dust to dust—to be united in the tomb with him who had gone before. Alas, for human hopes, and human expectations!

The Princess Caroline, now Duchess de Berri, is daughter of Francis I., King of Naples and the Two Sicilies, just deceased, by his first wife, the Archduchess Maria Clementina, daughter of the Emperor Leopold II., and sister of Francis, present Emperor of Austria. She was born on the 5th of November, 1798. Her earliest loss was that of her mother, who died on the 15th of November, 1801. In the year following, she had, for her step-mother, the Princess Maria Isabella, daughter of Charles IV., late King of Spain, and sister of the reigning monarch.

Before she had completed her eighteenth year, the Princess Caroline was married, on the 17th of June, 1816, to the Prince Charles Ferdinand, Duc de Berri, second son of Charles, Comte d'Artois (who succeeded to the throne of France, on the demise of his brother, Louis XVIII., on

the 16th of September, 1824), by his wife (deceased in 1805) the Princess Maria Theresa, daughter of Victor III., late King of Sardinia, and sister of Charles Felix Joseph, the reigning sovereign.—On Sunday, the day preceding the solemnization of the marriage, the young Princess of Sicily made her grand entrance into Paris. About one o'clock, the twelve legions of the National Guard, the Royal Guard, and the troops of the line, occupied the different points through which the royal cavalcade was to pass. At four o'clock, one hundred discharges of cannon announced the approach of the King (Louis XVIII.) and the royal family. His Majesty, the Duchess d'Angoulême, and the young Princess of Sicily, having arrived at the barrier of the Throne, left their travelling carriage, and entered an open landau. On the right hand of the King was the Duchess d'Angoulême, opposite to him was the Princess Caroline, and on her right sat the Duke de Berri. The municipal body of Paris complimented his Majesty, and the cavalcade proceeded. The fronts of the houses were decorated with elegant tapestries, white flags, and floral garlands. At every step the eyes of the fair stranger were charmed with crowns and ingenious allegories. In one spot were seen devices, fond tokens of the love of Frenchmen towards their Princes—a false and fickle love, Heaven knows!—in another, figures resembling net-work, which, the moment they were touched, resolved themselves into a profusion of flowers. It might have been deemed a fairy festival. From all quarters were heard the loud and increasing acclamations of *Vive le Roi! Vivant les Bourbons!* The bride, attired in a simple white robe, seemed fascinated by the spectacle, so new and so brilliant. She returned the cheers of the multitude by frequent salutations. It was not until half-past six o'clock that the procession reached the Tuileries, the gardens of which were occupied by an immense crowd, of all classes. At night, the public buildings, and most of the houses, were splendidly illuminated.

This was a gay and happy period for the youthful Duchess de Berri. At a grand court ball, subsequently given in honour of her marriage, the grace and lightness of her step were strikingly apparent. Brief, however, was her term of happiness. On the 21st of September, 1819, something more than three years after a marriage, hitherto more felicitous than often falls to the lot of royalty, she gave birth to a daughter, baptized by the names of Louisa Maria Theresa. Soon, it was her hard lot to sustain a visitation of a character widely different.

It was on the night of Monday, the 14th of February, 1820, that her husband, the Duke de Berri, fell by the hand of an assassin. With her, he had attended the representation of the Opera. At half-past eleven o'clock, a few minutes before the conclusion of the *ballet*, the Duke and Duchess de Berri left the house together. The Duke, at the moment of ascending his carriage, was struck by a poignard, which entered into his right side, and, as it was afterwards ascertained, penetrated six inches between the fifth and sixth ribs, and pierced the membranous muscles of the heart. The blood from the wound gushed over the dress of the Duchess, who had already taken her seat. The Prince instantly exclaimed, "*Oh, Caroline, je suis mort ;*" and was borne, profusely bleeding, and covering his bearers with blood, into a room of the Opera House. Professional men—Messrs. Dupuytren, Boujon, Drogard, &c.—were immediately called in. The first attempt was to bleed the royal sufferer in the arm and leg: the blood, however, refused to flow. He was then placed in a warm bath, on coming out of which he bled profusely. On the application of the *ventouse* (a dry cupping machine) he cried, in agony, "You make me suffer martyrdom; I know it is useless, I must die!"

By this time, the distracted father of the Duke de Berri, and other members of the royal family, were assembled. The Duchess d'Angoulême was so absorbed in the most profound grief, that she never shed a tear. The Duke, her husband, was frantic with despair; and the Duke de Bourbon—he whom France has recently mourned—burst out in accents of grief, as though he had anew bewailed

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the loss of his own son, the murdered Duke d'Enghein. At four o'clock, the King himself arrived at the fatal scene. The Duchess, whose pregnancy was on the point of being announced when this awful event occurred, never left her husband. She had, however, fallen into a swoon, which lasted four hours. Nor did the King, from the moment of his arrival, ever leave the couch of his nephew, notwithstanding the reiterated importunities of the professional attendants.

The Prince having expressed a desire to see his infant daughter, she was brought to him in her cradle at four o'clock in the morning. He kissed the babe, and gave her his benediction, pronouncing these remarkable words:—"Poor infant, may you be less unfortunate than the rest of my family!"

A young man having sucked his wound, the Prince, opening his eyes, said to him, "*What are you doing? My wound is, perhaps, poisonous.*"

Having made his will, the Duke de Berri, in the midst of his mental and bodily anguish—in the presence of those dear beings from whom he was about to be torn for ever—displayed pre-eminently the feeling of Christian charity. As a lover of mercy, he prayed for pardon for his murderer from the merited penalty of the law—for that callous-hearted, miserable being, who, in the prime of life, in the midst of public honours and domestic happiness, had remorselessly rent him from all that gladdens the heart of man, and sweetens and endears existence. He prayed for his murderer! Yes, in Christian meekness, piety, and benevolence, the dying Prince prayed for his murderer!

At six o'clock on Tuesday morning, after receiving the sacraments of the church, Charles Ferdinand d'Artois, Duc de Berri, breathed his last, at the age of forty-two. The Duchess again fell senseless when her august partner expired. She was torn from the side of her departed husband. When she recovered, she threw herself on her knees before the King, and implored of him to grant her leave to return to Naples. At five in the evening, Her Royal Highness set off for St. Cloud, whither she was accompanied by her kindly-sympathising relation, the Duchess d'Angoulême, one who has her-

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self drunk deeply of the cup of adversity. On re-entering her Palace Elysée, where all the household was in tears, nothing could be more affecting than her grief. She was about to cut off her beautiful hair, in which, however, she was prevented. "I no longer want this adorning," she exclaimed, "which my husband so much admired."

The remains of the deceased were removed from the apartment in which he expired to the palace of the Louvre. At seven in the morning of the following day (Tuesday) the doors of the palace were opened, and thousands were admitted to view the murdered corpse. It was laid on a state couch; priests repeating the prayers for the dead, and the guards of Monsieur ranged around, watching, sword in hand. At three, the gates closed, and no person was afterwards admitted.

Then followed a scene which it would be difficult indeed, even for an eye-witness, to describe. In the confusion necessarily induced by the perpetration of his horrid act, the assassin had attempted to escape; but he was pursued, and almost immediately taken and secured. "Monster!" interrogated one of the *gens d'armes*, "what could have led you to a crime of such atrocity?" "For six years," he replied, "have I meditated it, and I regret only that it is not consummated; my head I am aware is forfeited, but, I have attempted to deliver my country from her tyrant." He was a dark-complexioned man, of the name of Louvel, of middle stature, and apparently from thirty-six to forty years of age. It afterwards appeared that he had accompanied Buonaparte to Elba, and had returned with him when he effected his escape from that island.

After closing the gates of the Louvre, on Tuesday afternoon, Louvel, escorted by two *gens d'armes*, was introduced, and placed near the body of his victim. Astonishing as it may seem, the sight appeared not to excite in him the slightest emotion. He acknowledged his recognition of the body, and persisted in denying that he had any accomplices in the murder. After certain forms he was conveyed back to the Conciergerie.

Subsequently to the examination of the prisoner, the body of the Prince was re-

moved into an adjoining apartment, in which it was opened and subjected to a *post mortem* examination. The process of embalming then commenced. The interior of the Louvre was painted black; and, on the day following, and for nine successive days, the body lay in state, in a chapel hung with black, &c. During this period, the necessary preparations for the funeral were made in the church of St. Denis, where, finally, the obsequies were celebrated, and the ashes of the Duke de Berri mingled with those of his ancestors.

Throughout his examinations, his trial, his execution, Louvel preserved the most undisturbed composure, the most atheistical indifference. On his trial, which took place before the Chamber of Peers, on the 8th of June, his counsel defended him on the plea of insanity, but without effect. The process had been delayed thus long in the hope of discovering who, if any, had been his accomplices in the machination of the crime which he had committed; but, notwithstanding the utmost industry and minuteness of research, no traces of any such connection could be discovered. The assassin himself continued solemnly to deny that he had communicated his intention to any human being. He insisted also, in conformity with his first avowal, that the deed had been in his contemplation for six years past—that he had not the slightest personal quarrel with the Duke de Berri—that he had selected him from amongst the royal family, only because he alone seemed destined to continue it.*

* A circumstance had occurred on the night of the 28th of April, which was, at the time, thought to have some connection with the crime of Louvel. A lighted petard was thrown under one of the windows of the Tuileries, so near to the apartments of the Duchess de Berri, that it was generally supposed its object was to occasion the miscarriage of that Princess by the alarm of its explosion. The person who threw the missile effected his escape from the pursuit of the sentinels. On the night of the 6th of May, however, he repeated his attempt, with a petard of larger dimensions; but, fortunately, he was then secured while in the act of placing it on the ground. He turned out to be a man of the name of Gravier, formerly an officer in the army of Buonaparte, but out of employ since the

Louvel was of course found guilty ; and, pursuant to his sentence, he was executed on the Place de Grève, at six o'clock on the evening of the 7th of June.

But it was not by the diabolical agency of Louvel, that the hopes of continuing the Bourbon dynasty were to be crushed ; for, on the morning of the 29th of September, in the same year, the Duchess de Berri gave birth to a posthumous son—Henry Charles Ferdinand Dieudonné d'Artois, Duc de Bordeaux. The long-prayed-for blessing of a male heir (as it then appeared) to the crown of France, was celebrated by every possible expression of public joy and festivity. A numerous creation of the Order of the Holy Ghost took place ; and a subscription was opened, and speedily filled up, for the purchase of the royal castle and domain of Chambord, of which a grant had been made by Buonaparte to his military companion, Berthier.*

After the birth of her son, down to the recent but memorable revolution of "the three days," the Duchess de Berri lived in a state of comparative privacy ; occasionally, however, visiting Dieppe—one of her favourite spots—and other parts of France. Supporting several poor families,

disbanding of the army of the Loire. He was tried in the month of September following, and condemned to death as guilty of an outrage upon one of the members of the royal family. A man of the name of Bouton was at the same time condemned as an accomplice in the attempt. The sentence upon each was subsequently commuted for the punishment of hard labour for life.

* The castle of Chambord is situated near a village of the same name, in the department of the Loire and Char, ten miles eastward of Blois. It was built by Francis I., in the middle of an extensive park, on an island formed by the river Causson. It is of free-stone, in the Gothic style, and is esteemed the finest edifice of the kind in the kingdom. Stanislaus, King of Poland, resided nine years at Chambord ; and it was also the retreat of Marshal Saxe, who died there in 1750.

and extensively engaged in acts of charity and benevolence, it is little to say that she was universally beloved.

When her father-in-law, Charles X., found himself under the necessity of resigning the crown of France, it was his wish, in the first instance, to abdicate in favour of his son, the Duke d'Angoulême ; but, failing in that wish, he repeated the proposition in favour of his grandson, the Duke de Bordeaux. That offer was also refused ; and, in consequence, the ex-King brought over with him to England, as one of the companions of his exile, the young prince, with his mother, the Duchess de Berri, and the rest of the royal family. It is said that, in the little court of Holyrood Palace, of which Charles X., after a temporary sojourn at Lulworth Castle, is again the occupant, the Duke de Bordeaux is addressed as *Sa Majesté* ; a point of etiquette, which, if it cannot be admired, will be easily pardoned by all who can sympathise with fallen greatness.

After her arrival in England, the Duchess de Berri ordered a sale of her private property, for the purpose of raising about 400,000 francs, due from her Royal Highness for her expenses of the month of July, and the preceding quarter. At Rosny (the birth-place of the celebrated Duke of Sully), now, we believe, her only remaining property in France, all that can be rendered productive—such as the land, gardens, &c.—has been let, in aid of her comparatively circumscribed income.

Since her stay in this country, the Duchess de Berri, travelling chiefly under the title of La Marquise de Rosny, and attended by the Count Mesnard, the Countess Bouillé, and Madame Ludolph, has visited Chatsworth, Buxton, Macclesfield, Liverpool, Manchester, &c. More recently, her Royal Highness has been in the occupation of a house of moderate size, on the east side of Montague Square. It is understood that, in this humble retirement, the chief portion of her time is passed in the society of Madame Ludolph.